

# Bath 1981

A shared house in the Walcot, Bath.

Teenage Janie is talking about her teenage boyfriend Mark. They're together but it's funny, not serious. Janie describes with hilarity their antics in bed, "Oh no! He's going to spurt!" She laughs.

Thirty-ish Kate, in bosomy black satin dress is laying on her bed and talking about the twenty-ish new romantic she has been seeing. He works as a barman in a local club. Does he say what he likes?

"He likes being in bed, basically" Kate adopts ironic expression.

Punk record plays. Vinyl on analogue turntable, stereo, graphic equaliser. Janie has taken off the little hat with the widow's veil which she effects as a post-punk bit of atemporality. The rest of her clothes are conventional and unremarkable.

The hippy from upstairs is having a loud but muffled conversation with someone out in the corridor. "Whoo yeah baby! Give her nine inches of pork sword!" He exclaims, trying to sound not too different to the punks with whom he shares the house.

Kate raises her eyebrows, puts her head on one side at an angle. Speaking in her favourite tones of irony she says "He's NOT a hippy. And they accept that now".

Hermine slouches into the room in oversized beatnik jumper and tight slacks. She sits on the floor, leaning back against Kate's bed. She says she's seen that bloke with all the leather and studs hanging around again. "Interesting. Wonder where he left his bike?"

Another punk, Jerry, lounges into the room and sprawls on the floor. He has Oxfam shop trousers with felt-tip marker writing on the leg. It says "What wedding?"

Pete naively wonders what wedding the "What wedding?" is referring to. Pete actually hasn't heard about the marriage of Charles and Diana. Pete is nothing, neither hippy nor punk nor new romantic nor straight. He's just Pete, a slightly thick and gormless outsider.

Kate says to Pete, "You seem to turn up here in Bath a lot. I would've thought Bristol would be better for you".

Pete, slow on the uptake as always, replies that he goes to Bristol sometimes as well, when he's down from London.

Kate begins to tell the story of the police who have been around the area, questioning. "Shock and horror! Some terrible crime being committed, apparently..."

She describes one uniform officer who told her that it was good that she answered his questions voluntarily. He had told her "We could come in by force. But nobody wants that. You lose your door and we lose our face".

"Which made sense," says Kate.

In the pub one of the rascally old guys of the neighbourhood puts a punk record on the juke box. He calls out to a young punk who has black and white striped hair, "Skunk! This one's for you!"

Old friends meet at the door. "Stands back in a-maze-ment!!! Haven't seen you since that terrible gig where Jo broke up with thingy!"

Along down the road the antique dealers and the craft workshops have closed for the night. The pubs are open and the conventional people have headed home to their television sets. A girl leans on a lamppost, smoking a fag. She has one knee bent with foot placed firmly against the post. She wears clothes which look a little anachronistic. Slightly 1930s. She is a timewarp waiting for the time.

A local newsagent has a few copies of "Vague" stuffed in a rack along with the more normal magazines.

The streetlights reflect on the dirty rain puddles in the street and a Van Morrison cover band plays from a nearby pub.

The world is new. The world is old. The world is bad and won't be told.  
Life is bleak and yet, somehow, still good.